

AN ACT

relating to the dissemination of information regarding the cost of attending public and private institutions of higher education and regarding the availability of financial aid to assist in paying that cost.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Subchapter C, Chapter 61, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 61.0777 to read as follows:

Sec. 61.0777. UNIFORM STANDARDS FOR PUBLICATION OF COST OF ATTENDANCE INFORMATION. (a) The board shall prescribe uniform standards intended to ensure that information regarding the cost of attendance at institutions of higher education is available to the public in a manner that is consumer-friendly and readily understandable to prospective students and their families. In developing the standards, the board shall examine common and recommended practices regarding the publication of such information and shall solicit recommendations and comments from institutions of higher education and interested private or independent institutions of higher education.

(b) The uniform standards must:

(1) address all of the elements that constitute the total cost of attendance, including tuition and fees, room and board costs, book and supply costs, transportation costs, and other personal expenses; and

1 (2) prescribe model language to be used to describe
2 each element of the cost of attendance.

3 (c) Each institution of higher education that offers an
4 undergraduate degree or certificate program shall:

5 (1) prominently display on the institution's Internet
6 website in accordance with the uniform standards prescribed under
7 this section information regarding the cost of attendance at the
8 institution by a full-time entering first-year student; and

9 (2) conform to the uniform standards in any electronic
10 or printed materials intended to provide to prospective
11 undergraduate students information regarding the cost of
12 attendance at the institution.

13 (d) Each institution of higher education shall consider the
14 uniform standards prescribed under this section when providing
15 information to the public or to prospective students regarding the
16 cost of attendance at the institution by nonresident students,
17 graduate students, or students enrolled in professional programs.

18 (e) The board shall prescribe requirements for an
19 institution of higher education to provide on the institution's
20 Internet website consumer-friendly and readily understandable
21 information regarding student financial aid opportunities. The
22 required information must be provided in connection with the
23 information displayed under Subsection (c)(1) and must include a
24 link to the primary federal student financial aid Internet website
25 intended to assist persons applying for student financial aid.

26 (f) The board shall provide on the board's Internet website
27 a program or similar tool that will compute for a person accessing

1 the website the estimated net cost of attendance for a full-time
2 entering first-year student attending an institution of higher
3 education. The board shall require each institution to provide the
4 board with the information the board requires to administer this
5 subsection.

6 (g) The board shall prescribe the initial standards and
7 requirements under this section not later than January 1, 2010.
8 Institutions of higher education shall comply with the standards
9 and requirements not later than April 1, 2010. This subsection
10 expires January 1, 2011.

11 (h) The board shall encourage private or independent
12 institutions of higher education approved under Subchapter F to
13 participate in the tuition equalization grant program, to the
14 greatest extent practicable, to prominently display the
15 information described by Subsections (a) and (b) on their Internet
16 websites in accordance with the standards established under those
17 subsections, and to conform to those standards in electronic and
18 printed materials intended to provide to prospective undergraduate
19 students information regarding the cost of attendance at the
20 institutions. The board shall also encourage those institutions to
21 include on their Internet websites a link to the primary federal
22 student financial aid Internet website intended to assist persons
23 applying for student financial aid.

24 (i) The board shall make the program or tool described by
25 Subsection (f) available to private or independent institutions of
26 higher education described by Subsection (h), and those
27 institutions shall make that program or tool, or another program or

1 tool that complies with the requirements for the net price
2 calculator required under Section 132(h)(3), Higher Education Act
3 of 1965 (20 U.S.C. Section 1015a), available on their Internet
4 websites not later than the date by which the institutions are
5 required by Section 132(h)(3) to make the net price calculator
6 publicly available on their Internet websites.

7 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
8 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
9 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
10 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
11 Act takes effect September 1, 2009.

President of the Senate

Speaker of the House

I hereby certify that S.B. No. 1764 passed the Senate on May 5, 2009, by the following vote: Yeas 29, Nays 0; and that the Senate concurred in House amendment on May 30, 2009, by the following vote: Yeas 31, Nays 0.

Secretary of the Senate

I hereby certify that S.B. No. 1764 passed the House, with amendment, on May 27, 2009, by the following vote: Yeas 148, Nays 0, one present not voting.

Chief Clerk of the House

Approved:

Date

Governor